

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAKAR IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
INFO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PCAT, PARM, US, XA, UR

SUBJECT: US-SOVIET CONVENTIONAL ARMS TALKS: AFRICA

1. BACKGROUND: THE THIRD ROUND OF THE US-SOVIET CONVEN-

TIONAL ARMS TALKS (CAT) IS TAKING PLACE IN HELSINKI JULY 18-28. THE AIM OF THESE TALKS IS MOVEMENT TOWARD CONCRETE RESTRAINT MEASURES IN ARMS TRANSFERS. AT THE LAST ROUND, HELD IN MAY IN HELSINKI, IT WAS AGREED THAT ROUND THREE WOULD REVOLVE AROUND THREE WORKING GROUPS; POLITICAL/LEGAL CRITERIA FOR DECIDING THE LEGITIMACY OF ARMS TRANSFERS; MILITARY/TECHNICAL CRITERIA ON WEAPONS SYSTEMS AND THE POTENTIAL MILITARY EFFECTS OF WEAPONS TRANSFERS TO PARTICULAR REGIONS; AND REGIONAL SITUATIONS FOR PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF CRITERIA. AT THAT TIME, THE US SAID IT WOULD BE PREPARED TO MAKE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS ON SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA.

2. ANY ARMS RESTRAINT DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE TWO SUPER-POWERS POTENTIALLY RUNS INTO AFRICAN SENSITIVITIES AND MIS-INTERPRETATION OF OUR MOTIVES. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THOSE AFRICAN STATES WHICH FEEL THREATENED BY SOVIET ARMS TRANSFERS TO AFRICA MIGHT, IF UNINFORMED, SEE THE US AS ABANDONING THEIR OWN SECURITY NEEDS. WE HAVE THEREFORE CONCLUDED THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL TO CONSULT WITH SELECTED LEADERS AROUND THE CONTINENT PRIOR TO THE START OF THE ROUND.

3. ACTION ADDRESSEES ARE REQUESTED TO SEEK APPOINTMENTS AT APPROPRIATELY HIGH LEVEL IN ORDER TO INFORM HOST GOVERNMENT OF OUR IMPENDING TALKS AND IDEALLY SEEK ITS ENDORSEMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF REGIONAL RESTRAINT IN ARMS
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TRANSFERS. ADVISE IMMEDIATELY SHOULD APPOINTMENT NOT BE FEASIBLE BEFORE OPENING OF HELSINKI MEETING.

4. TALKING POINTS

A. THE US AND SOVIET UNION HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN A SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT. THE MOST PUBLICIZED OF THESE ARE, OF COURSE, THE STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS TALKS, OFTEN REFERRED TO SIMPLY AS SALT. WE HAVE ALSO HELD TALKS ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS. THROUGH THESE LATTER TALKS WE HOPE TO ARRIVE AT AN UNDERSTANDING WHICH WOULD STEM THE SPIRALING TRANSFERS OF ARMS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. WE WILL BE DISCUSSING WEAPONS SYSTEMS, MODALITIES OF TRANSFER AND, IN A PRELIMINARY WAY, MAJOR GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS OF THE WORLD. IDEALLY, THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD OF ACHIEVING ARMS LIMITATIONS IS FOR RECIPIENT STATES TO INITIATE A PROCESS OF RESTRAINT THEMSELVES. IN LATIN AMERICA THIS HAS ALREADY HAPPENED. IN 1974 8 LATIN AMERICAN STATES SIGNED THE AYACUCHO DECLARATION (WHICH CALLS FOR ARMS RESTRAINT IN LATIN AMERICA) AND FOLLOWING THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT OF THE UNGA THE LATIN

AMERICANS HAVE BEGUN WORKING ON PRACTICAL STEPS FOR AGREE-
MENT ON LIMITATION OF CONVENTIONAL ARMAMENTS IN LATIN
AMERICA. RECOGNIZING THAT MOST AFRICAN LEADERS WOULD
PREFER DEVOTING THEIR COUNTRIES' RESOURCES TO ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT RATHER THAN TO ARMAMENTS, WE WONDER IF AFRICAN
STATES HAVE CONSIDERED A SIMILAR APPROACH, PERHAPS UNDER
THE AEGIS OF THE OAU?

B. OUR LATEST ROUND OF TALKS WITH THE SOVIETS IS ABOUT
TO TAKE PLACE IN HELSINKI. AMONG THE VARIOUS TOPICS WHICH
MAY BE PLACED ON THE AGENDA MIGHT BE A DISCUSSION OF ARMS
BESTRAINT IN VARIOUS REGIODS. AMO G OTHERS, WE
MIGHT CONSIDER HOW TO SUPPORT THE LATIN AMERICAN INITIATIVE
AND DISCUSS THE GENERAL QUESTION OF ARMS TRANSFER RE-
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STRAINT IN AFRICA. WE WISH TO INFORM OUR FRIENDS ABOUT
THE UPCOMING TALKS, WHILE NOTING THESE ARE ONLY EXPLORATORY
IN NATURE. THEY MAY LEAD NOWHERE. WE WOULD HOPE THAT
AFRICAN LEADERS COULD SUPPORT THESE EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS
AS BEING IN THE CONTINENT'S BEST INTEREST.

C. WE WOULD EXPECT THAT AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS WOULD WELCOME

THIS INITIATIVE AS A STEP TOWARD REMOVING ONE ASPECT OF
THE GREAT POWER RIVALRY FROM THE AFRICAN CONTINENT. THESE
TALKS ARE HELD IN THE SPIRIT OF THE SSOD, PARTICULARLY
PARAGRAPH 85 OF THE "PROGRAM OF ACTION". AFRICAN GOVERN-
MENTS SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT THIS IS NOT IN ANY WAY A
SUPPLIER COLLUSION AGAINST AFRICAN INTEREST BUT RATHER ONE
ASPECT OF A WORLD-WIDE TRY AT SELF-LIMITATION.
FYI: PARAGRAPH 85 READS:

"CONSULTATIONS SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT AMONG MAJOR ARMS
SUPPLIER AND RECIPIENT COUNTRIES ON THE LIMITATION OF ALL
TYPES OF INTERNATIONAL TRANSFER OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS,
BASED, IN PARTICULAR, ON THE PRINCIPLE OF UNDIMINISHED
SECURITY OF THE PARTIES WITH A VIEW TO PROMOTING OR EN-
HANCING STABILITY AT A LOWER MILITARY LEVEL, TAKING INTO
ACCOUNT THE NEED OF ALL STATES TO PROTECT THEIR SECURITY
AS WELL AS THE INALIENABLE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND
INDEPENDENCE OF PEOPLES UNDER COLONIAL OR FOREIGN
DOMINATION AND THE OBLIGATIONS OF STATES TO RESPECT THAT
RIGHT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS
AND THE DECLARATION ON PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW
CONCERNING FRIENDLY RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION AMONG
STATES."

D. FOR ACTION ADDRESSEE EXCEPT DAR ES SALAAM AND LAGOS:
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YOU SHOULD REASSURE YOUR INTERLOCUTORS THAT WE INTEND TO KEEP IN MIND THEIR OWN LEGITIMATE SECURITY NEEDS. THE US PLANS TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON ITS COMMITMENT TO HELP THEM MEET THEIR OWN SELF-DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS. WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY STATED THAT THIS WOULD BE DONE WITH APPROPRIATE RESTRAINT. IF WE CAN WORK WITH THE SOVIETS FOR PARALLEL RESTRAINT MEASURES, WE FEEL THE INTERESTS OF OUR FRIENDS IN AFRICA WOULD BE WELL SERVED.

5. REPLIES TO THIS CABLE AND OTHER PERTINENT REPORTING ON AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE US-SOVIET CAT TALKS SHOULD BE SENT BY IMMEDIATE CABLE INFO HELSINKI SLUGGED CAT DELEGATION FOR MARTIN CHESHES. CHRISTOPHER

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